

HIV REPORTING UPDATE – MARCH 2007



Public Comment Period for Emergency HIV Reporting Regulations

Emergency regulations governing name-based HIV reporting were approved by the Office of Administrative Law and filed with the Secretary of State's Office on January 8, 2007. As part of the regulation process, an official public notice was released March 23, 2007, which began the 45-day written public comment period, which will end May 16, 2007. During the public comment period, written comments will be accepted by four different methods: 1) by mail to Office of Regulations, California Department of Health Services, MS 0015, 1501 Capitol Avenue, P.O. Box 997413, Sacramento, CA 95899-7413; 2) by fax to (916) 440-7714; 3) by e-mail to regulation@dhs.ca.gov; or 4) by using the "Making Comments on DHS Regulations" link on the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) Web site at www.applications.dhs.ca.gov/regulations/. All comments, including e-mail or fax transmissions, should include the author's name and U.S. Postal Service mailing address in order for CDHS to provide copies of any notices for emergency changes to the regulation text on which additional comments may be solicited. No public hearing is scheduled at this time, but one will be available upon request. Interested parties may go to CDHS' Office of Regulations Web site to view the text of the emergency regulations: [Click here → Regulation Title \(R-06-014E\) Reporting of HIV Infection by Name](#).

Renewal of HIV/AIDS Confidentiality Agreements

Following the enactment of the HIV name-based reporting law on April 17, 2006, local health department (LHD) staff signed confidentiality agreements developed by CDHS, in accordance with the new law. This law requires that all state and LHD staff and contractors sign an HIV/AIDS Confidentiality Agreement (DHS 8689) prior to accessing confidential HIV-related public health records. As part of an annual review process, LHDs may find that it is time to renew their employee confidentiality agreements. To renew these agreements, LHD staff should sign new DHS 8689 forms, and submit the completed forms to the Office of AIDS (OA) for review and approval. The latest DHS 8689 form (10/06) is currently available on OA's Web site at www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ooa/HIVReporting/ under "Related HIV Reporting Forms." For additional information, LHDs should contact their OA Surveillance Coordinator.

Upcoming HIV/AIDS Surveillance Conference

This year's *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Conference: Moving Forward* will take place May 15–17, 2007, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Sacramento. The conference is designed to provide educational and training opportunities regarding HIV/AIDS surveillance and reporting, epidemiology, and technical program assistance. Online registration for the conference will be available on the RDL enterprises Web site at www.rdlent.com by early April. Additional announcements and conference information will also be provided on RDL's Web site as it becomes available. LHDs with questions regarding the upcoming conference should contact their OA Surveillance Coordinator for additional information.

Annual Match to the California Death Registration System

In February 2007, OA, HIV/AIDS Case Registry (Registry) Section staff completed an annual match of the HIV/AIDS Reporting System (HARS) and the California Death Statistical Master File. The purpose of this match is to verify death information and to identify previously unreported deaths among HIV/AIDS cases in the statewide surveillance system. OA provided each jurisdiction with a list of HARS cases classified as Living or Unknown mortality status, which represent potential matches with the vital statistics file. LHDs should review these records and update HARS with any relevant death information. OA Registry staff are available to answer questions regarding the match, and to provide technical assistance or support to LHD staff.

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Quarterly National Data Processing

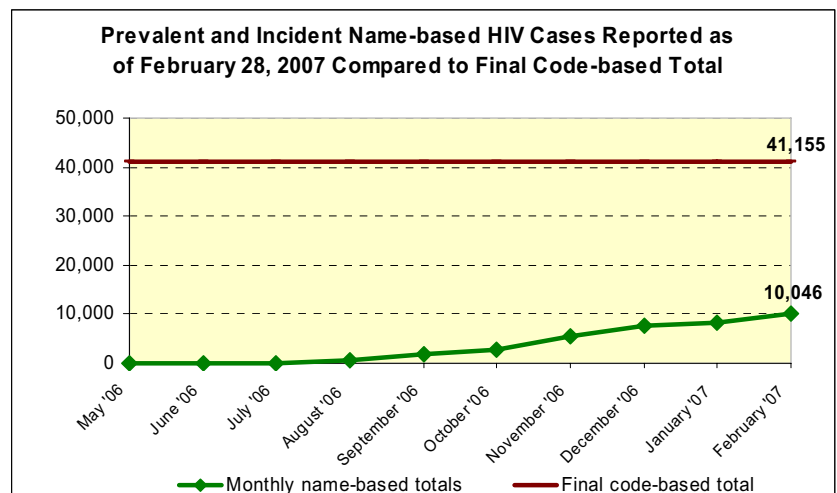
Last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention implemented a nationwide data quality effort, the National Data Processing Initiative (NDPI). NDPI aims to consolidate HARS data into CDC's new surveillance software, eHARS, through data cleaning and format conversions. NDPI uses CDC criteria to identify HARS records with errors, such as missing or invalid values, which make them ineligible for inclusion in the national HIV/AIDS surveillance dataset. Unless errors are corrected, CDC will remove these records from the national dataset. In an effort to assist LHDs meet the federal data quality standards, OA prepared updated lists of HARS records that have errors identified through NDPI processing. These lists have been distributed to each affected LHD. To ensure that all reported HIV/AIDS cases in California are accepted into the national dataset, OA will be performing NDPI processing on a quarterly basis using CDC protocols. LHD staff with questions or technical assistance needs regarding NDPI should contact their OA Surveillance Coordinator.

Best Practices for Confidential Mailing

Best practices for confidential mailing have been and continue to be incorporated into each LHD's Scope of Work for HIV/AIDS surveillance. According to these practices, all case report forms, HIV/AIDS related material, and/or encrypted electronic data are submitted using double envelopes. The outer envelope (e.g., sender or recipient address or label) must have no reference to HIV/AIDS or include any terms easily associated with HIV/AIDS. The inner envelope must be marked 'Confidential,' sealed, addressed to an authorized individual at OA, and should also identify the agency that originated the package mailing. All confidential mail must be sent by traceable courier services only (i.e., United Parcel Service, Federal Express (FedEx), or U.S. Post Office). The overnight mailing address is California Department of Health Services, Registry Section, MS 7700, 1616 Capitol Avenue, Suite 74.616, Sacramento, CA 95814. Only county personnel who have signed a Confidentiality Agreement (DHS 8689) are permitted to handle confidential mail. Should LHD staff have any questions about these practices, they may contact OA Registry staff for assistance.

HIV Case Counts¹ as of February 2007

As of February 28, 2007, a total of 10,046 cases of HIV infection have been reported by name to OA. This number reflects a net gain of 1,747 HIV cases over the previous reporting period. Currently, 48 LHDs statewide have submitted name-based HIV case reports, representing nearly 80 percent of all jurisdictions. LHDs that began reporting HIV cases by name in February 2007 include: Glenn, Inyo, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, and Tehama Counties. At this time, the level of reporting for prevalent and newly diagnosed HIV cases accounts for almost one-quarter of all cases reported under the code-based system, 41,155.



¹ On a monthly basis, OA disseminates summary statistics that describe the extent of California's HIV/AIDS epidemic. These routine surveillance reports are available on OA's Web site at www.dhs.ca.gov/AIDS/Statistics. Beginning in April 2006, the monthly HIV statistics published by OA reflect the number of HIV cases reported by name. For HIV statistics based on cases reported by non-name code, refer to surveillance reports published prior to April 2006, available on OA's Web site.